

SEABIRD ISLAND EDUCATION DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

Toti:lt q'ep tset

Our learning together

Spring | Summer 2025

Volume: 1 Issue: 2



Seabird Island Band

Graduation 2025!

Director's Message



Éy swáyel Seabird Island Community,

Welcome to the second edition of Toti:lt q'ep tset. This issue highlights the incredible work happening across all four divisions of our Education Department.

At **Seabird College**, we marked the success of our ECE, Business Administration, and therapy program graduates, and launched new initiatives like Indigenous Culinary Arts and the Trades Awareness Program. Student stories like Ashley, Octavius, and Yvonne remind us of the power of learning close to home.

At **Lalme' lwesawtexw**, we celebrated student learning through the MMIW Walk, Spring Concert, Sports Day, Naming Ceremony, and the graduation of 12 students. These events reflect the strength of our school communi-

ty and our commitment to land-based and cultural education.

Our **Youth Program** continues to grow with meaningful drop-in activities and exciting summer programming that supports skill-building, confidence, and cultural connection.

Finally, our **Pre-Employment Services** team has welcomed two new staff members, strengthening our support for community members on their career paths.

Together, these efforts reflect our vision: to support learners at every stage and build a strong future for our Nation.

Ts'íthomé,

Barbara White
Director of Education
Seabird Island

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College

Since 2008, Seabird College has provided Indigenous students the opportunity to pursue post-secondary education while staying connected to home, family, and culture. Our comprehensive support removes common barriers to education through free tuition, transportation assistance, childcare funding, daily meals, and cultural and mental wellness support.

Recent Successes and Achievements

Our diverse program offerings serve students from across the region, with recent celebrations highlighting the success of our approach:

Early Childhood Education & Business Administration

June

In June, we attended the graduation for our ECE and Business Administration programs. These programs prepare students to make meaningful changes in classrooms and communities. Cultural Education and Connections Specialist Zack Joe opened the ceremony with a traditional welcome that embodied our commitment to cultural integration. Graduates included a number of mature students and parents who balanced education with family responsibilities, showing great resilience and determination. Many are already employed in childcare centres or administrative roles in community organizations.

Community Support & Therapy Programs

We celebrated recent graduates from our Community Support Worker Diploma and Indigenous Focusing-Oriented Therapy programs, who are now equipped to serve their communities with culturally informed care. Several graduates have already secured positions with local health services.

Ashley Harris and Octavius Billy exemplify the impact of community-based education. Ashley recently completed her Education Assistant practicum, while Octavius continues working toward his Early Childhood Educator Diploma with Seabird's post-secondary funding support. Both made significant contributions during their practicums at Lalme' lwesawtexw, helping in classrooms and supporting younger students. "Their time here was invaluable," noted Principal Steve Beier.

Another student, RaeAnne Charlie, completed the Trades Awareness Program and has now enrolled in the Welding Foundation program at UFV, inspired by her experience at Seabird College.

Graduate Spotlight: Yvonne Harry, Business Administration Certificate

"If you see an opportunity, take it." That's the advice from Yvonne Harry, who recently completed the Business Administration Certificate program. Inspired by her mother's entrepreneurial spirit, Yvonne enrolled to pursue her interest in bookkeeping and develop new skills. She shared that the program helped her grow both personally and professionally: "I feel more confident and informed now—I notice things in everyday life, whether I'm at work or just out shopping." Yvonne encourages others to go for it, even if balancing work and school feels overwhelming: "This has truly been one of the best decisions I've made."



What's Launching at Seabird College

Trades Awareness Program Now Accepting Applications

Seabird College is now accepting applications for the Trades Awareness Program (TAPS), starting this August at Seabird Island. This four-week introductory program is designed to help students explore opportunities in the residential trades and discover a path that fits their interests and goals. TAPS provides hands-on learning and foundational skills, making it an excellent starting point for anyone considering a career in the trades. Whether you're just starting out or looking for a new direction, TAPS offers a supportive and engaging entry into the world of skilled trades. Apply today to reserve your spot!

For more information, contact Charnelle George at charnelle.george@seabirdisland.ca.

New Childcare Support Initiative Launching in August

To support student parents, Seabird College is launching a new childcare support initiative beginning this August. Eligible students will receive \$20 per day of class attendance to help with childcare costs. This benefit is available until the student's child turns 18 and is based on attendance. Students must provide a birth certificate to qualify. The \$20 is a daily maximum and does not increase with the number of children.

For more information, contact Jill Kozol at jill.kozol@seabirdisland.ca.

Community Engagement

Seabird Island Festival

Seabird College proudly took part in this year's Seabird Island Festival with a booth in the newly created Education Zone. College staff connected with hundreds of festival-goers throughout the weekend—playing games, handing out freebies, applying temporary tattoos, and sharing information about our programs. With sunny skies and a strong-community turnout, the event was a big success. We're already looking forward to next year!



Information Night

Seabird College also hosted its annual Information Night on June 4, bringing together representatives from Seabird Post-Secondary (Seabird Community School), Seabird Youth Program, Employment Services, Human Resources, WorkBC, SASET, and AE Concrete. Community members enjoyed a casual dinner of hotdogs and salad while having the chance to speak directly with service providers about education, training, and employment options. Now in its second year, the event saw increased turnout and engagement—a positive sign of growing community interest.



Student Well-Being Supports

At Seabird College, we understand that hunger can be a barrier to learning. That's why we provide free breakfast and lunch to all students every school day. Meals are thoughtfully prepared with a focus on nutrition and feature locally sourced ingredients whenever possible.

Mornings can be hectic, and it's not always easy to grab breakfast or pack a lunch. Our meal program ensures that students are well-fed and ready to focus on their studies — because learning is easier when you're not running on empty.

Why Choose Seabird College?

We welcome students from a variety of backgrounds and experiences—including youth, adults returning to education, and parents.

Benefits for Students:

- **Free tuition for Indigenous and Indigenous-identifying students**
- **Transportation assistance (case-by-case)**
- **Childcare support**
- **Student support services on campus (by appointment)**
- **Smaller class sizes for personalized attention**
- **Daily breakfast and lunch provided**
- **SASET Employment Services on campus**
- **Access to driving school**
- **Open to all seeking Adult Dogwood Diploma completion**

Learning in their own community helps students maintain connections to family, culture, and local opportunities while building skills that benefit both themselves and the Nation.

New programs are currently being developed, and information will be shared as it comes available.

Stay Connected: www.facebook.com/SeabirdCollege



Community Events

Easter Celebration Brings Families Together

April

On April 12, our Education Department hosted a community Easter celebration featuring pancake breakfast, Easter egg hunt, bouncy castle, face painting, and rock decorating.



MMIW Walk: Standing Together in Solidarity

May

On May 5, our school joined Seabird Island, AESS, and Agassiz communities in a powerful walk honoring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. The walk began at Pioneer Avenue and concluded with drumming, singing, dancing, and meaningful words near the Broken Whisk.



First Nations Schools Association Conference Presentation

May

At the First Nations School Authority Conference, "Cultivating Cultures of Success" on May 8-9, two of our teachers, Natasha Jollymour and Suzanne Smith, shared their work on land-based learning and how it connects to high school science. Their presentation showed how traditional knowledge and learning on the land helps students stay engaged and succeed in school.



Marina Grand Opening Celebration

May

On May 17, ten of our students joined with staff to celebrate the grand opening of Sq'ewqel Developments' Marina in Harrison Hot Springs. Our students shared their talents through drumming and singing, joined by other Seabird community members. This event gave our students a great chance to be part of Seabird Island's growth through song, movement, and community pride.



Student Activities & Performances

Spring Concert Showcases Student Talents

May

On May 29, our school hosted the annual Parent's Day Tea and Spring Concert, welcoming approximately 100 parents and family members to celebrate student achievements. The event began with demonstrations in the music room, where students showcased their learning in bucket drumming and rhythm keeping.

The afternoon concert in the gymnasium featured diverse performances including songs, dances, and recorder performances by older grades. The variety of talents displayed reflected the comprehensive arts education our students receive throughout the year.

Special recognition goes to Rosanne for organizing such a meaningful event and to all participating students who shared their talents with pride and enthusiasm.



Sports Day Brings Community Together

June

Our annual Sports Day on June 6 featured students from all grades participating in diverse activities including canoeing, archery, track and field events, soccer, water games, and scavenger hunts. The beautiful weather created perfect conditions for outdoor learning and play.

Parents and community members were welcomed to support students and share lunch together, strengthening the connections between school and community. Many students tried new activities, building confidence and discovering potential interests.



Seabird Festival Education Activities

June

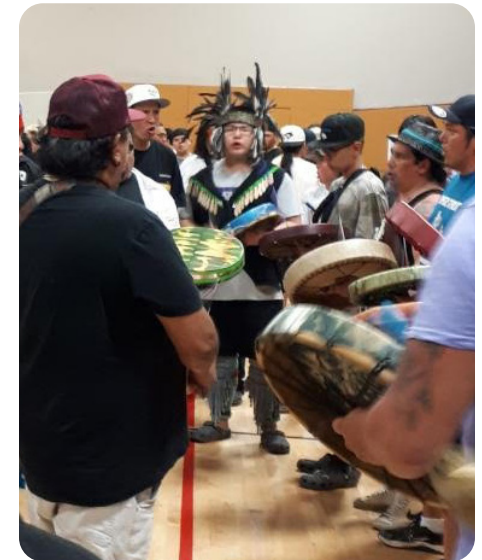
Our Education Department played an important role in this year's Seabird Festival, working with Health to create safety and wellness support. The Youth Manager and Education Director worked shifts until midnight, focusing on welcoming visitors, building trust, and making sure youth felt safe and supported.

The Education Department set up an Education Centre where community members and festival guests could learn about all our programs and services. Working with our Safe Zone partners from First Nations Health Authority, we shared information packages, newsletters, lawn games, freebies, temporary tattoos, and helped students run a craft sale fundraiser.



Lalme' Iwesawtexw hosted our first Seabird Days Coastal Jam in the school gym, welcoming community and guests to celebrate culture through singing, drumming, and dance. The Director of Education organized the event with Elizabeth Julian as host and Luke Pike as MC. We had visiting drum groups including Lummi Blackhawks and River Spirit Canoe Club. Youth joined in traditional dance competitions like the Greenhorn Dance and Boys/Girls Dance.

Throughout the weekend, education staff connected with community and guests, volunteering with traffic control, parking, cleanup, supporting and hosting various events, and sharing information about the programs and services available. It was a great weekend and a lot of fun for all.

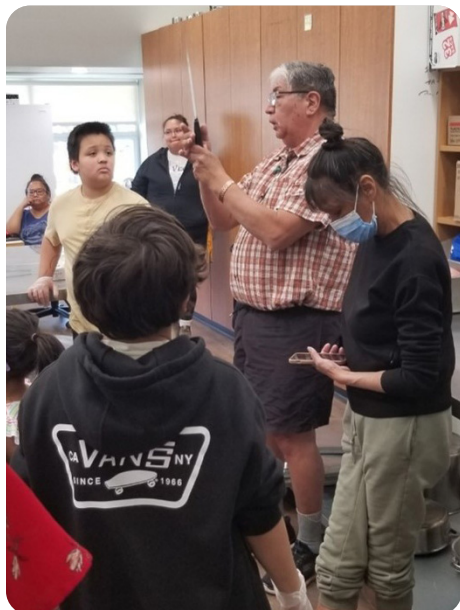


Cultural Connections

Fish Salting: Preserving Traditional Knowledge

April

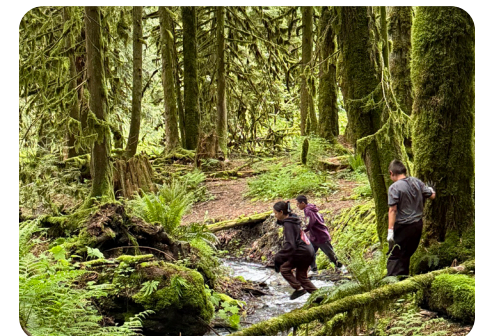
Brenon McIntyre and Rod Peters joined elementary students in the school kitchen to demonstrate traditional fish preservation through salting. Students listened to Rod's teachings while watching Brenon prepare fish for preservation.



Cedar Harvesting: Grade 6 Land-Based Learning

May

On May 13, grade 6 students learned traditional cedar harvesting, including identifying suitable trees, carefully pulling bark without damage, and preparing cedar for traditional uses. Back at school, students continued preparing their harvest and began weaving headbands for their June 24 transition to high school ceremony.



Skills Development



Trade Sampler Program Builds Career Foundations

April - June

Our Trade Sampler program launched on April 1 with 12 students—10 grade 12 students and 2 adult dogwood students—attending daily classes at UFV from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. This hands-on program provides university-level instruction in various trades while building comfort and confidence in a post-secondary environment.

Throughout April, students completed carpentry, plumbing, and electrical modules while earning first aid and CPR certification. The program continued with automotive, welding, culinary arts, and forklift certification components.

Students have expressed enthusiasm for the program, with many setting their sights on specific trades at UFV for fall enrollment. Instructor Jeremy, who has supported our students for three years, continues to provide exceptional guidance and encouragement.

FireSmart Education Promotes Community Safety

April

On April 9, Dan, Jacqueline, and Ember the FireSmart Fox visited our school to share important fire prevention and recognition knowledge with both elementary and high school students. The presentation emphasized being FireSmart at home and in the community while teaching essential prevention strategies.



Celebrating Tradition & Academic Achievements

Annual Naming Ceremony Honors Students

June

On June 4, Seabird Island Community School hosted our annual naming ceremony, a traditional celebration that recognizes the special gifts and growth of our students. This meaningful ceremony offers students the opportunity to receive traditional names—either family names handed down through generations or new names given by family or school community.

This year, six current students and one former student were honored with traditional names that acknowledge their unique gifts and development. The ceremony brought together school staff and students, family members, Education Committee members, and Chief and Council to witness this important cultural milestone.



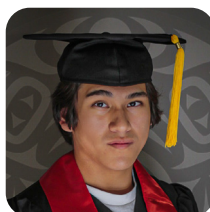
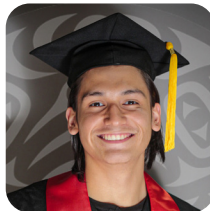
Graduation 2025: Celebrating Achievement

June

On June 13, our community came together to celebrate 12 new graduates receiving their grade 12 diplomas from Seabird Island Community School. This graduation ceremony was entirely planned and organized by the graduates themselves, with each aspect reflecting their input and their families' involvement.

The celebration began at 10:00 AM and continued well into the afternoon, bringing together families, friends, staff, Education Committee members, and Chief and Council. The graduates' leadership in organizing their own ceremony demonstrated the independence and responsibility they've developed throughout their educational journey.

Congratulations to our Class of 2025! Your achievements represent not only academic success but your readiness to take on new roles within our community.



Youth Program

Exciting Program Plans Ahead

This year, our Youth Program will offer fun workshops and activities around four important topics: healthy relationships, sexual health, conflict resolution, and staying safe from harmful substances. Through hands-on learning and programs that connect to our culture, we want to help young people learn new skills, feel more confident, and make smart choices in safe, supportive spaces.



Drop-In Activities

We've updated our drop-in hours! Join us Wednesdays and Saturdays from 12:00–8:00 pm for food, fun, and community.

On Wednesdays, our amazing High School Red Seal Cook leads hands-on cooking lessons from 12:00–5:30 pm. You'll learn to make full meals, build real kitchen skills, and even take home all the ingredients to cook the dish again for your family!

Saturday programming is coming soon—stay tuned!



Festival Fun and Community Engagement

Our Youth Program made a big impact at this year's Seabird Festival! The Seabird Skate Crew hosted fun Skate Days and a Bannock and Skate Jam, joined by Hippy Mike at the Hockey Box. Youth cooked fresh bannock to share with festival guests, gathered for drumming and singing, then showed off their skateboarding skills at the skate park. This event brought together traditional food making with modern youth activities, creating good connections between generations and cultures.



Summer Fun Coming Soon

We are planning an awesome Youth Summer Program for July and August! We are still putting together all the exciting details and will share more soon.



Employment, Training & Social Development

Team Growth

We're excited to welcome **Melinda Russell** and **Cheyenne Leon** to our team!

Melinda Russell brings experience as a **Career Development Practitioner** with a strong background and passion for culinary arts. Her work with SASET and the University of the Fraser Valley has prepared her to support our clients with both knowledge and heart.

Cheyenne Leon has served as a Youth Case Manager and supported Indigenous students at UFV as a Department Assistant in the Indigenous Student Centre. Her dedication to youth and Indigenous education makes her a valuable team addition.

Upcoming Events

- **Seabird Island Community School Registration**
Ongoing
- **Family Gill Net Making**
Jul 3
- **Summer Kick Off Event**
Jul 4
- **Youth Work Experience Program**
Jul 7 - Aug 29
- **Back to School Event**
Aug 20

Toti:lt q'ep tset is published by the Seabird Island Education Department. For more information or to contribute to future editions, please contact Jessica Loosdrecht, Executive Assistant to the Director of Education at jessica.loosdrecht@seabirdisland.ca.

Seabird Island Community School – Register now!

Highlights:

- **School Food Program:** Breakfast and Lunch daily.
- **Literacy, Numeracy and land-based learning focus.**
- **Halq'emeylem Language**
- **Cultural Ceremonies and Connection**
- **Cultural morning protocol:** drumming, singing, dancing.
- **Eymexw Awards:** recognition for students who demonstrate positive character and good attendance!
- **UFV Trades Sampler:** learn six different trades while earning credits towards graduation.
- **Full Day Junior Kindergarten (K4)**

Schools are for children, and they come first!

At Seabird Island Community School, we are deeply committed to nurturing the whole child and empowering them with the knowledge, values, and skills to lead successful enriching lives while honoring Indigenous roots.

Registration packages are available at Seabird Island Band Office or through the below contacts.

Contact Information:

604.796.3061
1.800.788.0322
education@seabirdisland.ca
seabirdschool.ca

Scan QR Code to go to the new website!



QR Code Instructions: scan QR code with your phone camera, select link to access website. On the website select the 3 bars at the top of your screen, select "Registration", scroll down to "Forms".